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CONSIDERATIONS

ON

PAROCHIAL MUSIC.

BY

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

**S**INCE the publication of this Tract in the year 1787, the author has been favoured with communications from several respectable persons both among the Clergy and Laity, who have been desirous of forwarding the introduction of a better Psalmody ; and many applications having been made for copies, after almost the whole impression had been given away, he has been induced to proceed to a second Edition, not with a view to profit, but to accommodate such persons as may be desirous of seeing what has been said upon the subject, and to entreat the continuance of their endeavours for the promotion of so desirable an object.

The principles of the following Tract are to be found in a Treatise on Music, by the late Dr. Brown, of Newcastle ; and all that is necessary for the present subject, in  
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the extract of that work published in the Annual Register, 1763, vol. vi. The author claims no merit, but that of dilating Dr. Brown's ideas, and introducing them again to public notice, at a season more favourable for carrying them into execution.

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**T**HE union of music with religious worship, has been so consecrated by time and usage, that we may well regard it as universal; for it would be difficult to point out any age or country, in which a system of religion was established, where it did not exist.

This union, as founded on the nature of man, is rational;—as sanctified by the revelation of God, is religious. The Prophets, from Moses to Malachi, adapted their inspired compositions to the voice and the instrument;—the Psalms of David are an everlasting treasure of harmony to the church; and the musical service of the temple was an establishment of greater extent and magnificence than any other religion \* has to boast.

\* Lowth's Lectures.

Under the dispensation of the gospel, we have the example of Christ, and the uninterrupted practice of the church to authorize the usage, and such authority constitutes a duty.

The use of music, is, to rouse and animate the affections, to warm the heart, to relieve lassitude and lukewarmness in devotion, to convey our praise, prayer, adoration, and thanksgiving to the throne of grace; and to exhibit a service upon earth, conformable to the ministry of Angels in Heaven.

According to the usage of the Church of England, Music is either Cathedral or Parochial.

1. Cathedral Music being scientific, is confined to those only who are masters of the science.

2. Parochial Music is designed for the people at large; it is therefore simple, intelligible, and easily attainable by the ear.

## CATHEDRAL MUSIC.

THE example of the Jewish Church is sufficient authority for the institution of a choir separate from the body of the people: for we may justly conclude, that what the Divine inspiration  
has

has sanctified under one dispensation, must be equally acceptable under another.

And though it is true, that in the primitive ages of the Christian Church, no such establishment is discoverable; yet if we trace the course of things, we shall find that it was rather a natural progress or consequence, than an abuse, or intended encroachment on the rights of the people.

In the primitive Church the whole congregation was divided into two parts, or choirs, singing alternately \* the verses of their Hymns; or at other times, both united in answer to the minister.

To this custom succeeded the practice of a single voice taking a single part, and the congregation joining in the close. These single parts gradually became more refined, and varied, either from the progress of the science, or the emulation of the performer; and consequently greater knowledge was required to execute them: the more individuals increased in this knowledge, the farther were the people left behind, till at length they could no longer join at all, and the service became peculiar to professors.

\* Bingham's Antiquities, book xiv. chap. 1. & 2. Pliny's Epist. to Trajan, Book x. ep. 97. *Carmenque Christo, quasi Deo, dicere secum invicem.*

The church of Rome during the long empire she maintained, cherished this mode of service, as adding another distinction to those already subsisting between the Clergy and the Laity; but the reformers considered it as an injury done to the people, and one of their first attentions was to restore them to their share in this duty, and to furnish means for effecting the change.

For this purpose, the Psalms were turned into metre, Hymns were composed, plain and popular tunes were adapted, and such was the inclination of the people, that this mode of singing soon became a characteristic distinction of all that deserted the Church of Rome; nor was the sermon more eminently contrasted to the mass, than the Hymn or Psalm to Cathedral Music \*.

The warmth which attends all revolutions in sentiments, soon carried the opinions on this head to extremes. In the countries where the reformed Religion took place, Cathedral Music was quickly deemed a badge of Anti-christ. The rights of the people were insisted on. The professors were stig-

\* Strada in his history of the war of the Low Countries, exhibits a picture very similar to the conduct of the Methodists in our own country about thirty years ago; and if the Methodists had found similar errors and corruptions in the established Church, or experienced similar persecutions, their progress might have been as rapid as that of the Reformers.



matized for that very skill which constituted their excellence; and the Cathedrals themselves were dismantled.

But the moderation of the Church of England was as eminent on this point, as every other. On the one hand, Cathedral service was supported, by refounding and annexing a Cathedral to each Bishopric: on the other, the rights of the people were restored, by giving them a metrical version of the Psalms, and by adapting melodies to it, at once plain and solemn.

This system of moderation we have hitherto no right to complain of; it has at least been one cause of supporting those venerable fabrics\*, which do honour to a national Church, and the especial means of promoting a science, which, if we may judge from the present disposition of the people, contributes to recommend Religion itself.

It was manifestly the design of our ancestors about the time of the reformation, to have dif-

\* At the time of the dissolution of Abbies and Monasteries, if a very small portion of the lands had been reserved for the maintenance of Cathedral service, and support of the fabric, those noble buildings which are now the standing monuments of rapacity and desolation, might have continued to this day, ornaments to the kingdom. Whatever the inhabitants of those buildings deserved, the buildings themselves were consecrated to God.

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fused a more general knowledge of Music among the Clergy, and by their means to have communicated it to the people. The statutes of the Colleges in both Universities, and other Collegiate foundations, require a proficiency in this science to be attended to; and though these statutes are now so completely obsolete, as to furnish no hopes of again enforcing them, it is probably owing to the neglect on this head, that the Parochial Music has fallen into decay and contempt.

That the body of the Clergy should ever be restored to the attainment of this science, by the ordinary course of their education, is not now to be expected; but as the science itself is every day more diffused, and its use, value, and estimation every day better understood, it is not improbable that the Clergy may again become the means of recommending it to the people, and the people be persuaded of the pleasure and advantage to be derived from it.

## PAROCHIAL MUSIC.

PAROCHIAL Music is at present confined to Psalmody, which, from the general manner of performing it, is become an object of disgust, instead of rational delight and edification. To point  
out

out the cause of this, is the first step towards the remedy.

The general cause is, the indolence, or backwardness of the congregation, which restrains them from joining in this part of the service; and this has introduced an attempt towards a remedy, which is worse than the evil.

This consists principally of two parts, which shall be denominated ABUSES, not in a bad sense, but as a perverted use of a good practice.

The first is, the Select Band of the country Church.

The second, the Charity Children in the Metropolis.

The first of these abuses cannot be better described than in the following words,—“• Here “ devotion is lost between the impotent vanity “ of those who sing, and the ignorant wonder of “ those who listen;” and it is really matter of astonishment that either the minister, or the better part of the congregation have suffered this evil to increase to the extent it has: that at the same

• Dr. Brown.

time



time both complain that their ears are wounded with dissonance, and their ideas degraded to ridicule; neither the minister has exerted his influence, or the congregation claimed their right, but have tamely suffered themselves to be precluded from a duty specially their own, and the service to be lengthened, (as it sometimes is unreasonably) by a practice that adds tenfold to the tedium of it.

The common excuse is, that these men would not come to Church at all, if this inducement was withdrawn; the answer is plain; if all joined, all would have the inducement; and for one that would be lost, ten would be gained; and if the secession of those who compose the band, constitutes the difficulty, that will be considered hereafter.

The abuse in the metropolis is similar in its nature, and equal in point of disgust. Charity children, it is true, are taught by masters better qualified to form them for this service; but whether these masters cannot now depart from an established custom,—whether the error arises from the children themselves, from their incapacity, from imitation, or emulation, the evil is equally to be complained of. They universally sing at the utmost height of their voice; and fifty or an hundred



dred trebles, strained to their highest pitch, united to the roar of the full organ, can never raise admiration of the performers, or a sense of devotion in the hearers; the disgust is general, and the complaint of the congregation, universal.

To this, perhaps, it will be answered, that the effect is just the reverse in the general assembly of the charity children at St. Paul's. I grant it is. But still it must be allowed the intent is also different. The devotion of a Parochial Congregation, and the sensations inspired by an assembly like this, are perfectly distinct. The union of five thousand trebles, raises admiration and astonishment. It is a Choir impossible to collect by any other means. Add to this, that a variety of other ideas go to make up the whole of our delight. Compassion, benevolence, and Christian charity dilate the heart. Considerations of public utility engage the attention. Reflections upon the probable advantages accruing to so many human creatures rescued from total ignorance, steal upon the mind; and the aggregate of these several feelings, contribute to render it one of the most heart-moving spectacles ever exhibited in this or any other country; conduct, order, and regularity crown the whole, and we are enraptured with a view that proclaims the triumph of benevolence and Religion.

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But to return from this digression: it is to be presumed, that the Charity Children in London, and the Select Band in the Country, will be generally allowed to contribute nothing to devotion; and to obviate the disgust arising from these, two methods have been taken.

The first is, that adopted by some few chapels\* in London and other places, where a band is appropriated to chant the Psalms, Te Deum, &c. which is competent also to perform an Anthem with sufficient accuracy. This is a system which partakes more of Cathedral, than Parochial service. But as the instruction of the performers is not so scientific as to give it all the advantages of the former, it would perhaps be wiser, if they could be brought to lead the congregation in the performance of a Musical service which all might partake in, than to assume a distinct share to themselves. A common † chant is easily attainable by the ear; and if the same was always used, would soon become familiar to the audience, and all be insensibly led to join in it.

\* Portland Chapel, the Octagon Chapel in Bath; and some Churches, if I am rightly informed, in Lancashire.

† For this purpose, no chant is better calculated than that which the charity children sing at the conclusion of each psalm, at St. Paul's.—It is composed by Mr. Jones, and has been adopted in one congregation with success.

A chant

A chant of this kind might not only become congregational, but national; for though variety may please, when we consider the performer only, still if we consider ourselves as joining in the performance, facility is the primary object. And the attachment to national tunes, when once established, instead of offending by sameness, is always upon the encrease \*. If such a Band as this could be made subservient to this purpose, it would contribute much more to edification, both in the service, and the Psalms, than their own separate performance; and might point out the means of commencing and establishing a mode of public service, at once consistent with reason, and the practice of the primitive Church,

Another kind of remedy has been attempted in the Chapels of several hospitals and public charities in the metropolis, where the objects of the institution, or the children have been taught by ear † only, to perform the musical part of the service, with sufficient accuracy to attract and delight. The attraction is a sufficient motive to

\* The German Jews are said to have a chant or intonation of this sort which never varies. The Swiss tune is too well known to need mentioning.

† This is not strictly accurate in regard to the Foundling Hospital. The Asylum appears to have obtained all that is desirable in this point.

make



make us approve the wisdom of the directors, in adopting this plan. But it is at the same time a lesson to us all; for it proves how much more affecting and delightful the service of the Church is, when performed in this manner, and intimates how small the difficulty would be, to obtain the same excellence in every congregation throughout the kingdom. So long as this excellence is attainable by the ear only, it is within the reach of every congregation, and it wants only method and order to acquire this, which, if a spirit was once raised to make the attempt, would follow of course. It is true there is sometimes a particular voice in these Chapels to admire, and particular compositions of a superior cast to attract. The managers err not in employing the one, or the other; so long as they confine themselves within the decorum requisite to a Protestant Church, they have a right to adapt compositions to the purpose of their institution. But there is no prejudice in asserting that the general union of a Parochial congregation is superior in effect even to this; for here each individual is a partaker, and not a hearer only. He is warming his heart and raising his affections by the performance of his own duty; he is giving glory to God in his own proper rank and station, instead of pursuing a gratification of the same kind with that which arises from a public performance, or a spectacle.

EXCEL-



## EXCELLENCE OF PAROCHIAL MUSIC.

“ THE performance of Parochial Psalms, though in the villages it is often mean, yet in the great towns, where a good organ is skillfully and devoutly employed by a sensible organist; the union of this instrument, with the voices of a well instructed congregation, forms one of the grandest scenes of an unaffected piety, that human nature can afford.”—Such are the sentiments of a man \* perfectly qualified to decide upon the subject; and no one reason can be given, why this blessing and delight should not be extended throughout the Church of England. It is an extraordinary circumstance, that at the time organs were first introduced into parish churches, some sort of popular music was not attempted to render them of more general use and benefit to the congregation. While this instrument was peculiar to cathedrals, the use of it was contributory to science. But when a parish has built one, and settled an organist’s salary at a considerable expence, without receiving any further use from it, than to have their ears cheared with a voluntary, or directed in the psalmody, they

\* Dr. Brown.

shew

shew that they are more ready to bestow their money than their pains to promote this rational and pleasing part of the public worship. The present moment is perhaps more favourable for renewing the attempt, than any which has hitherto presented itself in this country. A scientific knowledge of Music is more generally diffused than at any former period ; the grand effects of the art are more generally acknowledged,—the great celebrities and numerous concerts in the Capital, the music meetings, oratorios, and concerts established in the great country towns, have given a relish and excited a taste in all the higher and middling ranks throughout the kingdom. And the universal prevalence of the taste or *passion*, if we chuse to style it such, seems to inspire a hope, that Music may once more be united with public worship, so as to answer all the best purposes of edification and devotion.

The execution of this design must finally rest with the people ; but as the first motion will never come from them, it will be no difficult task to point out the means by which they may be led to a duty, which tends ultimately to their own advantage and delight. That they are alive to feelings of this kind no other proof is wanting, than the attraction they all experience in the Psalmody

mody of the Methodists. It is not rashness to assert, that for one who has been drawn away from the Established Church by preaching, ten have been induced by Music. And many who have primarily had no other attraction, have, by their attendance on it, given an opportunity to have their affections estranged from the Established Church, which they would not otherwise have been exposed to.

We have no right to complain of this system of the Methodists,—they fight with lawful weapons, for they are the same as the Reformers employed against the Church of Rome. And if we are sensible of the efficacy of them, why should not we proportion our mode of defence, to the nature of the attack? We have none of the corruptions of the Church of Rome to preponderate against us, in the decision of this spiritual combat. Our cause is good, the citadel of our Faith is strong; but we are to guard the outworks with jealousy and circumspection.

That the harmony arising from the voices of a well regulated Methodist Congregation is delightful, no one who has heard it, can deny. Let us not envy them the enjoyment of it, but draw our own instruction from it; and this we may readily do,

do, by examining in what points their excellency consists.

And here, though I profess to speak ignorantly of Music as a science, perhaps it will be generally acknowledged that the effect is produced, first, by the union of every voice in the assembly, (no one being negligent, inattentive, or remiss;) secondly, by practice; and thirdly, by moderating the voice to the most harmonious pitch.

For, that it does not consist in better Musical composition, is evident. Their superiority is as manifest in the performance of a common psalm tune, as in any modern composition adapted to their own hymns.

That it does not consist in better voices, is equally plain, because when the effect is most striking, no particular voice is heard.

That it does not arise from greater previous skill, is easily proved; for they have no skill but practice, and pretend in general to no knowledge of the science, but what they have acquired by the ear.

This knowledge arising from practice is all that is requisite to form any congregation to  
equal



equal excellence; whether the people of our Church will submit to this, is the only doubt; but if there ever was a season proper for trying the experiment, it is the present one;—the cause is not hopeless, and even if it were, there is merit in the attempt.

## MEANS OF RESTORING PAROCHIAL MUSIC.

THE sure method of recalling Music to its pristine rank in the public service, is to inspire the people with a belief that it would contribute to their comfort and advantage. That this is generally true, has been endeavoured to be proved in the preceding sheets, but the mode of applying this particularly, must be by recommendations from the Clergy, and superior part of the congregation; and the means of executing the design, must be forwarded by the parish clerk, the organist, and the instructor.

To the Clergy I speak with the utmost degree  
of deference, not presuming to dictate to any, as  
each must best know the particular situation, tem-  
per, and wants of his own congregation. But I  
imagine there are few Clergymen on country  
D benefices.

benefices, who do not sincerely lament the existence of a Select Band in the gallery, and wish to remove it, by bringing the whole body of the people to perform their part.

The country Clergyman has great advantages on this head; for where his character is respected, his advice has ever great weight. If it were an addition to the burthen of his pastoral office, there are still enough ready to undertake it; but if example and encouragement are the two chief points necessary, I can hardly conceive any one unwilling to try the experiment.

The first step requisite (and in this the chief difficulty consists) is to collect a few creditable persons to attend a practice after service; it is possible that some of this description, offended by the ordinary mode of singing, would listen to the persuasions of their Minister on this head; or in parishes where there is no select choir in the gallery, perhaps the business would be easier to induce the people to admit proper instruction from the beginning, than to correct a bad method where it has already taken place\*.

\* A plan recommended in a sensible Tract published at York, is as follows:

A singing master of sense and judgment selected ten persons with good tenor voices, and having instructed these in  
a cer-

But supposing in either case that the Minister were inclined to favour a reformation; after this step gained, the mode of conducting such a practice is easily pointed out. For if the Minister were possessed of Musical abilities himself, sufficient to direct (a supposition not unreasonable in the present age) his presence and example would reduce every thing into order.

If the Minister were not competent to this office, or should deem it inconsistent with his rank and situation, his presence only would be of equal service. There are few villages so remote, as not to be within reach of some Musical Instructor, and one who, at a small price, would be glad to employ the Sunday to his profit. But for his office those persons are not meant, who go about the country as professed teachers of Psalmody, as from them and their method the very evil complained of originates. If, however, there are among these, any who know how to teach better, and teach in the present way only from compliance with habit and custom, any that

a certain number of plain melodies, 'till they sung in time and tune, he placed them in different parts of the church; he next proceeded in the same manner with basses and counter-tenors,—by degrees the whole congregation came to join with them, so as to approach as near as possible to perfection.

can submit to correction or admonition, even these might be usefully employed.

Some Ministers will, doubtless, object to disgusting their present Band; they will esteem it driving one body of men from Church, before they are sure of securing the attendance of others; they will be desirous of avoiding divisions, and parties in their parish, and envious comparisons between the new and old method. But perhaps it is not impossible by discreet management, and gradual means, to make these very men leaders and conductors in the design; and by dispersing them in different parts of the congregation, to employ them as directors of others, instead of engrossing the whole of this service to themselves, in a distinct gallery, or seat.

It is true that emulation is as prevalent in this rank of life, as every other; that the rustic in the performance of a rude anthem is animated by as much ambition as the best performer in the first Cathedral, and deems himself possessed of as much comparative excellence. To degrade him from this self-elevation, is difficult, without disgusting him: but it is not impossible, if another kind of pre-eminence is proposed;—if he is shewn that he may become an instructor, a director, or leader of others, and if at the same time it is suggested  
that



that he is rendering a service of Religion more acceptable to God and profitable to his fellow Christians.

Much is not to be built upon the facility of this system; but if the attempt was once made, many difficulties would vanish of themselves in the execution; one of these is, the bringing these men who have conceived notions of their own skill and excellence, back to plain singing; to induce them to discard every kind of anthems, singing \* in parts, new and varied compositions; and if this were once effected, the bad habits of delivering the voice through the nose instead of the mouth, the unnatural shrillness of the upper voices, and the tone of provincial utterance (which are the evils chiefly complained of) would be readily corrected by instruction and practice. One cannot readily account for the introduction of anthems, and varied compositions into the Parochial Service; it has certainly done no good, and as it throws the rest of the congregation out of all possibility of partaking, it evidently does

\* It is not meant by this observation to discourage the progress any congregation may make towards arriving at this excellence, but to silence the country band in their attempts of this sort, which are sufficient to prevent the congregation from joining with them, without producing a pleasure to compensate for the loss.

harm:

harm :—“ \* Our common Parochial Music needs  
 “ no reform, its simplicity and solemnity suit well  
 “ its general destination, and it is of power, when  
 “ properly performed, to raise affections of the  
 “ noblest nature.”

† To restore this in its primitive purity, is doubtless an object with every one, who regards the decency of public service. If then a Minister could once induce a very small number to commence a *practice* under proper instruction, where nothing should be attempted but what was attainable by ear, every parishioner might be invited to listen; curiosity would draw some, religion induce others, delight affect all; and as the progress became evident, and the ear once more familiarized to simple tunes, the whole might be brought to join in a service, at once captivating and meritorious.

Without building too much upon a plan of this sort, we may at least say it is not impracticable. And though various other means might be pointed

\* Dr. Brown.

† The Parochial Music in Lancashire is said to be performed suitably to its intention almost universally. If the Clergy in that part of the kingdom had given an account by what means so desirable an object has been obtained there, this work would have been superfluous.

out

out to effect the purpose; it is perhaps better to leave the remainder to the discretion of every pious Minister, who may know best what methods to adopt, and what opportunities to embrace, than to presume to dictate, where we have only a right to persuade. But were the business once effected, I am persuaded we should have no more complaints of the tedium of public worship, much fewer instances of desertion to Sectarists, much fuller congregations, and more benefits conferred upon them.

In the congregations of the Metropolis and great towns, much doubt is to be made, whether the example or exhortation of the Minister\* could prevail. The leading members of the parish are usually more rich and powerful than the pastor; ridicule might be thrown upon the attempt in its outset, and if that was successful, the combat against habit, and usage, would be too unequal to be maintained to advantage.

On this account, it would be prudent rather to apply the means we have, than to attempt any new method with the parishioners themselves.

\* The author is happy to find himself mistaken on this head, his recommendations have succeeded in his own parish with almost all the men, and with some of the female part of his congregation; the same success has attended the Rector of St. Anne's, Westminster.

With

With this view, the correction of the charity children must be the first and principal object; and to effect this, we want only the assistance of the Parish \* clerk, the Schoolmaster, and the Organist.

If the united efforts of these were employed, the evil complained of would be remedied without difficulty. The School-master is usually the instructor in Music, but always attendant on them at church, and the regulator of their conduct there. Might not he be brought, by the persuasions of the Minister, to see that his own credit, and the advantage of the institution were concerned in an alteration on this head? And is not every master sensible of the constant complaints against the obstreperous manner of the childrens making the responses, and the over-strained exertion of their pipe in the psalm?

I grant that the responses are to be audible, but it is no reason because the congregation is too low, that the children are to be loud. The medium is easy to conceive, and easier to establish,

\* The author has found that little premiums to the children, and friendly communication with these officers, will effect a reformation in a single month, and receives the thanks of his congregation for it.

and



and when established would contribute greatly to the decorum of public worship.

In regard to the Psalms, if they were *practised* to the pitch that was proper for the Church, the first difficulty is removed. The utmost stretch of the voice, is not the most pleasing part of it. Even in the finest, it causes admiration more frequently than delight; and there is still another difference between height and loudness. It has been thought by some, that the violent exertion of such boys as can sing, and the full organ, may contribute to drown the imperfections of the younger children, who are not sufficiently instructed. If this is really the case, it were better that the uninstructed were restrained entirely, till they could join with correctness, than to suffer their deficiency to spoil the whole.

There is an harmonious compass in almost every single voice, but if not, certainly in every collection of human voices; what this is, the instructor must know better than it is in my power to point out; and when this is found, to keep the children within the limits of it, can be a task of no great difficulty.

The teacher is likewise to recollect, that the children are in the service of the public—that their

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support

support depends chiefly upon the congregation to which they are attached ; and therefore the congregation has a right to demand from them, a conduct on this head, which is not obstreperous or offensive. It is their duty to lead, but not to drown the voices of such as are disposed to join. And if they were confined absolutely and entirely to this pitch, they would become not merely ornamental to the Church as an exhibition of benevolence, but an useful and essential part of the congregation.

One method of obtaining better instruction for them, would be, by desiring leave of the Minister and Church-wardens, for them to come to Church half an hour before the service \* commences; during which time they might practise or rehearse with the organ, an opportunity which they rarely, if ever, have in the school, and which would conduce much to promote the alterations necessary to be introduced. It is not impossible, that rehearsals of this kind should attract several of the parishioners, and if such attendance should once be-

\* This has been obtained, and the office executed with great success; and were it in the author's power to attend his Church constantly, he is convinced the whole Congregation would join in a short time

come

come habitual, it would contribute more to forward a general knowledge of Music, and affection to it, than any other method which could be devised.

The effect of such a rehearsal in regard to the children themselves, may be estimated by the success of that attendance, which they give at St. Paul's previous to the annual meeting, where one or two rehearsals, added to the instruction of the school, produces a degree of accuracy, which is not usually supposed to be attainable by the ear alone.

If the charity children were, by these means, or any other, reduced once more into order, and made to perform with propriety, a rational and animating part of the public service, it is to be presumed that many of the audience would delight to join in an office no longer grating and disgusting. And when once a sense of harmony and pleasure was excited, the addition of fresh voices would go on encreasing, till the junction became general and universal. Many in every London congregation are always qualified by a knowledge of the science, many would acquire a taste for it by habit and usage. And every one blessed

with the humblest degree of ear might attain it, if it was an object of desire and satisfaction.

Much assistance might be given to this good work by the selection of a judicious Parish clerk ; or where it should happen that he was attached to old customs, the Minister might easily interfere with efficacy and success.

But much more might be expected from the attention of a skilful Organist ; and the love of the science, it may be reasonably supposed, would be a sufficient inducement with most of them, to contribute their assistance. The additional trouble of attending a rehearsal before service, few of them would complain of, and were that the case, a small present sum might compensate their attendance ; till upon a demise, or fresh election, it were made part of their agreement.

I apprehend under the present system, the organ is generally too loud, and sings too little ; this is a complaint every where rectified in the Methodist assemblies, and the effect is visible. It might likewise be requested of the Organist, in the performance of the prelude, to play the tune once over, quite plain, without variations, immediately



immediately previous to the commencement of the Psalm; and this alone would give every tolerable ear, the opportunity of acquiring both the time and tune.

It is with the utmost deference I give any opinion relative to Music; but there is one alteration which, if it could be effected without detracting from solemnity, the proposal of it is to be hazarded. That is; *playing the original psalm tunes to somewhat quicker time*;—it seems probable (if other objections do not stand in the way) that this would facilitate the perception of the ear, and enliven the sensations of the mind; both which are objects of consequence, if they can be obtained without incurring censures of another kind.

In those congregations of the Metropolis where there are neither children or organ, it must be confessed that the cause is almost hopeless. The Clerk commences his stave, and goes through it almost wholly unaccompanied, or perhaps joined towards the close, by the feeble efforts of a single voice or two, in a manner sufficiently indicating the feelings of timidity. This is the natural result of that diffidence which restrains every one from standing up as a professed singer. He  
would

would be glad to join in a general strain, but can scarce persuade himself to set an example to others.

In this place it may not be improper to say a word on the usage of sitting or standing while the Psalm is performing. The Rubric prescribes nothing on this head; and though standing may be the more proper posture on the occasion, still it is, if required, an obstacle of weight in the very point, where every difficulty ought to be removed. Natural diffidence is a sufficient check in itself, without the addition of other impediments, and this is a diffidence which the female part of the congregation will never surmount;—why \* then is a point to be made of any particular posture to the exclusion of those voices, which in places where all sing, form the finest and sweetest part of the general harmony?

Our first business is to revive a relish for this duty, by any lawful means in our power; and where a congregation has been once brought to take a pleasure in it, and experience its effects we

\* It is not intended by this to justify the posture of sitting, for the propriety of the contrary is evident; but only to allow every indulgence to the timid, rather than deter them by making it a duty.

may

may trust to their own feelings and the warmth of their own hearts afterwards, that every thing decent and suitable to the occasion, will follow of course from their own suggestions.

These reflections may have been extended perhaps beyond their proper bounds, but it is not possible to close them, without mentioning the hopes which are opened by the institution of Sunday Schools. From the spirit with which this undertaking has commenced, it seems more than probable, that the numbers instructed in this form, will greatly exceed all that are comprehended in all the other modes of education. It is possible that it should extend to the whole lower class throughout the kingdom; that the time is approaching when every individual who does not wilfully refuse the blessing, shall be enabled to read the Scripture for himself. What then forbids some humble attempt to be made towards the instruction of these children in psalmody? If the design should succeed to its full extent, here may be opened the means of rendering the whole body of the lower people capable of feeling and joining in this service. Very small attention in the Parish clerk, where he is capable of teaching might effect this instruction in their infancy, which  
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in manhood would contribute to the honour of religion, the decency of public worship, and the advancement of general edification.

## METRICAL COMPOSITION.

It is a desirable object, if it could be obtained, to restore all those parts of the service originally intended for Music, to the usage and practice of the Primitive Church. It has been hinted above, that a simple chant, if it could once be recommended to general or national approbation, might be employed to restore propriety to the performance of the Psalms and Hymns, which are now only read, instead of being sung alternately, as was the original custom of the Church.

But though this is true in theory, much doubt is to be made, whether any attempt to deviate from the present practice on this head, might not offend from the idea of innovation, or might not produce confusion and ridicule, before the people themselves were disposed to adopt it, from their own feeling and improvement. How far any particular congregations might be inclined

to



to make an experiment of this kind, must be left to themselves, and the opportunities time may produce. The object of this tract goes no farther at present, than to restore plain psalm-singing to its use and rank in the public service; if that were once effected, and the people willing to go farther, it is better to trust to their inclination, than to prescribe to them on this subject.

It is said that there is a natural propensity in some nations \* to Music, more than others; but whether this propensity is in nature, or not rather the effect of habit, early education, and familiarizing the ear to musical sounds, may be disputed. It is certainly not *pré-eminently* the natural taste of our own people; but if it is a talent acquirable by education, that education must have a commencement.

That the people have not attained, or, rather, have lost their relish for Parochial Music, is owing partly to the causes of disgust already enumerated, and partly to the poorness of metrical composition appropriated to this use.

\* The Bohemians are said to perform the whole of the service which requires Music, by the ear.

In the verification of Sternhold and Hopkins \* there are few stanzas which do not give offence or excite ridicule. This failing, however, is not imputable to the poets, but to the age. The cesure of verse,—the cadence produced by accent—the power and ease of expression,—the precision of rhyme, were all points little understood at a period, when the language had not yet been taught to feel its own powers, or its materials rendered tractable by fabrication. Many inaccuracies likewise of other kinds offensive to our ears, were probably not unpleasing to our ancestors. But if from the improvement of our language, or the refinement of our knowledge, the whole is become unfit for its office. The dictates of reason and the service of religion require, that it should now be discarded, and some substitute prepared to supply its place. To this, there is little obstruction, but the expence of purchasing a sufficient number of copies of the new version for the use of country congregations, and if the parish would make the first purchase at the general expence, the supply could be afterwards easily kept up at the charge of individuals.

The new version of Brady and Tate is privileged by royal authority, and “ Though not ex-

\* Dr. Brown.

“ cellent,

“ cellent, is not intolerable,” in the opinion of a competent judge\*. Possibly we might with justice go a step farther, and say,—that some degree of fastidiousness has been indulged, in judging this version. There is certainly nothing in it to offend the ear, and little to revolt the understanding. These qualifications are sufficient to recommend it for popular use, nor ought we to expect high strains of poetry or perfect composition in works of this kind; if the best poets of the last age had contributed to form a version, it would not have given universal satisfaction. Brady and Tate, though not poets †, are by no means intolerable versifiers.

But if psalmody was once restored to its original rank and estimation, it would become an object of regard to the ruling powers, to have this whole matter reconsidered and revised. In that case, it would not be difficult to form a collection from different authors, which might carry this point as near perfection, as is requisite. There is a version by King James I. which Mr.

\* Dr. Brown.

† The chief objection to their version is the loss of the metre adapted to the Music of the old 104th Psalm.—There is only one Psalm in the new version to that metre, and that one of the poorest in the collection.

Pope commends, and is worthy of his commendation; there is another by Sandys; an excellent one by Dr. Merrick; there are detached psalms in Milton, and other authors; all which might be examined and appreciated, and a whole formed which would do honour to our own, or any other Church; and if such a selection \* were once

\* Since the publication of this Tract, it has appeared that there are several selections, which indicate a spirit of attention to the objects here recommended.

1. By the Rev. Dr. Glasse, from Brady and Tate, now adopted by the Society for promoting Christian knowledge. The melodies to this are published separately.

2. By Mr. Whitbread, from various authors, for the use of his own parish in Bedfordshire, with melodies.

3. Rules for Psalmody, by Mr. Heron, organist of St. Magnus.

4. A Collection, with melodies; by Mr. Miller, of Doncaster, now publishing, which, from the proposals, appears to be a valuable work.

5. The whole of Merrick's version adapted to the use of the church, with melodies, by the Rev. Mr. W. Tatterfall, of Wotton Under Edge: And this last (unless any objection should arise from the superior style of the poetry) is well worthy of receiving the royal authority for admitting it into the service of the church.

sanctioned



sanctioned by Royal and Episcopal Authority, it would come to the people with every prospect of producing all the reformation that is desired.

Such a work as this, would contribute to form a national taste, as well as promote the national religion, nor is it impossible that with suitable encouragement, religious Music should again enter into the recreation of domestic leisure, and revive the sentiments of primitive Religion. Then also an opportunity might offer, for once more calling in the aid of fresh Musical composition, which new metres might require, or the simplicity of the present metres could admit; but nothing of this sort can be attempted till many of the previous points are established.

In regard to Hymns and all compositions not authorized by the Church, great caution is required. The extravagancies introduced by some of the sectarists on this head, ought to be a sufficient warning how we deviate from the established custom. The Church of England, in compliance with the principles of the reformation, has restricted \* us to the use of scripture

\* Dr. Brown.

language.

language. And where this has not been the case, and men have indulged their private fancies, you may find a text of scripture indeed at the head of the Hymn or in the margin; but the induction from it in the body, wandering into the wildest licences, commendatory of particular tenets; and glaring contradictions, confounding the perspicuity of the text.

That the mischief of this sort might be introduced into the Established Church, is much to be apprehended, if any compositions of individuals were admitted into the public service. And if private families were disposed to adopt any of these for their recreation, there are few worthy of recommendation, except those of Dr. Watts.

Upon the whole it is much safer and more consonant to the principles of a reformed Church, to confine ourselves wholly to the Psalms of David; and what subject of Religion is there which these cannot supply? Penitence, contrition, prayer, praise, and thanksgiving are here prepared ready for our use; and as we allow these compositions to proceed from Divine inspiration, what more can we require? Dr. Watts\*, how-

\* Preface to Watt's Hymns.

ever,

ever, is of opinion, that the sentiments of David are not always suitable to our wants, or hopes, nor arrive at the pitch, Christian knowledge aspires to. But for the first, a remedy may be found by proper selection; and for the last, it is better to bear an inconvenience, which Revelation has not vouchsafed to remove, than to fly to uncertain expedients of our own. Christ has not, by means of his Apostles or Evangelists, supplied this deficiency; we may presume therefore it is only imaginary; and if a dispensation of this kind had been absolutely requisite for his Church, we may reasonably conclude he would have granted it.

Nothing here said is meant, however, to argue against the use of private Hymns by private persons, or to discredit those who have employed their talents in composing them. The purity of public worship is the sole object of these reflections. But if a taste for Religious Music should ever pervade the retirement of domestic life, how profitably and rationally might the tedious hours of Sunday be passed in amusements of this superior cast?

Where the several members of a family are attached to Music, (as is the case in many instances

stances at present) what higher gratification can the master of it propose, than seeing his children and dependants form a choir to the glory of their Creator ?

X In the exercise of such a service as this, every man has a right to select for his private usage, whatever is consonant to sound Religion and Morality; the Church allows this principle in the article of prayer; praise and thanksgiving are doubtless entitled to an equal privilege.

## C O N C L U S I O N.

X THE hints thrown out in this short treatise, it is hoped, will give no offence to any of the Clergy as appearing to proceed from an arrogant or dictatorial spirit, a love of censure, or a desire of innovation. The author hopes he has expressed the sentiments of every rational and sober-minded Minister: he trusts that all equally lament the loss of this edifying and useful part of public worship, and that any attempt towards restoring it to its original estimation and primitive simplicity, will prove acceptable to every member of our Communion. It is at least a favourable opportunity to make the effort, and if the subject is once brought  
into



into contemplation, and the cause not given up as hopeless, men of better understanding and more knowledge will be induced to give their thoughts to the public. If the spirit of the people were once raised, the adoption of some system like this would soon become general.

The decency and propriety of public worship is an object of high consequence in every well regulated community; the people may be driven from Church by disgust, their attachment may be rendered inviolable by consulting their rational delight. No means are more proper, more consonant to Religion than the restoration of Parochial Music. It is a bond of union, a centre of attraction, a source of intellectual pleasure. Those who come to join in praises, must join in prayer also,—must hear the word of God read and expounded to them, and must partake of all those benefits which public devotion and public worship confer.

To the Clergy exhortation is superfluous, or perhaps arrogant; but to the Parish clerks as a body, to the Masters of charity schools, or the Instructors of the children in Music, some application may be essentially useful. Every friend to those institutions must be desirous of rendering

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them as worthy of public notice and regard as possible ; their support depends upon public contributions, and in an age when charities are grown so numerous,—when many have the charms of novelty and the spirit of the first proposers to recommend them, it is doing no small service to these seminaries, if we can recal the attention of the world to them, by placing their utility in a new light, and give a new cause for satisfaction, in making them contribute to the decorum of public Worship, and the good of Religion.

And finally, a word ought to be addressed to the body of the people ;—it is their pleasure, advantage, and edification, which is the principal object of every thing that has been said. Their general attachment to the Established Church is sufficiently evident, and nothing but a sense of deference to that, could have induced them to bear with the improprieties above specified ; their concurrence is essentially necessary to a reformation, and could they be once persuaded that the whole difficulty consists in the first attempt, that the alteration itself is easy and natural, and the result finally contributory to their own satisfaction, we need not doubt of their assistance in effecting so desirable a change.

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The manners of the age are favourable to the design :—Music was never better understood as a science, or more sought after as an instrument of intellectual delight. There is scarce a public charity which has not been benefited by its effects, its repetition has not fatiated, its resources are inexhaustible. What we approve in public, we may bring home to ourselves ; what we pursue as a gratification, we may render serviceable to our spiritual welfare ; and if the spirit should once go forth, our Church may become as illustrious for Sacred harmony, and Religious decorum, as for Christian purity and genuine Faith.

T H E E N D.

The moment of the age is the moment of  
 change:—there was never before and there is  
 none, or give thought after an arrangement of  
 intellectual delight. There is a public  
 change which has not been brought by its effects,  
 its reputation has not gained its reputation as  
 inexhaustible. We are not aware in public, we  
 may think that we are not aware, what we mean as  
 a collection, we may think that we are not aware  
 of the weight which the public mind has to  
 form, our Church has become a self-possessed  
 sacred canon, as for  
 Christian public opinion is the

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THE END



